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SUBJECT Interview with Admiral Stansfield Turner

CHRIS WALLACE: With me this morning is former CIA Director Admiral Stansfield Turner to give us an insider's view into the military situation in the South Atlantic.

Admiral, good morning.

ADMIRAL STANSFIELD TURNER: Good morning, Chris.

WALLACE: The British move into South Georgia made some sense. It was an easy victory without heavy casualties. But what happens next? There are no easy moves left, are there?

ADMIRAL TURNER: No. Because if they move from South Georgia towards the Falkland Islands, they then come within range of Argentinian land-based airpower, just barely within its range. But they also have to worry about the airfield on the Falkland Islands. They have to worry about the three remaining Argentinian submarines, which could come out and lay in this area, waiting for the British fleet to come down. There are also two Argentinian fast torpedo boats in here that'll be prepared to dash out at them.

In short, there was very little opposition over here. But this could be a big bit to chew off.

WALLACE: All right. What do the British do?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, my feeling is Mrs. Thatcher will pause now, not risk her fleet, and see if the pressure from having taken South Georgia will bring the Argentinians back to the negotiating table in a more cooperative mood.

WALLACE: There is some talk out of Britain that the

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British fleet will come down and establish a beachhead on the Falklands in some remote area, simply to increase the pressure. Do you think that's likely or not?

ADMIRAL TURNER: I don't think that's likely in the next few days. That's certainly the next kind of move that the British might take. They don't have the amphibious force just to assault the Falkland Islands, like we did at Normandy or Okinawa and such...

WALLACE: A heavy risk for them to do that.

ADMIRAL TURNER: I think it would be quite risky because they're so outnumbered.

But they can, with their helicopters, be mobile and move around and put small forces on different places here, hope to wear the Argentinians down while they try to chase them.

WALLACE: All right. If you're the Argentine commander, what do you do now?

ADMIRAL TURNER: You prepare your defenses here. Be sure that your troops are well-positioned, they're well-trained and well-motivated. The naval commander then should prepare to move his three remaining submarines out into this area, hoping to lie in wait quietly, so that the British force will virtually stumble on top of them.

WALLACE: As an old Navy man, how'd you feel about the Argentines letting that submarine be caught here in South Georgia Island. Were you surprised at that?

ADMIRAL TURNER: I was surprised that the Argentinian Navy put on that poor a show. That was a very poor piece of work.

WALLACE: When they knew that the British were in the vicinity, why get caught?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Everybody was predicting that was to be the first assault by the British. To have a submarine caught in port on the surface was just very bad.

WALLACE: Admiral, which side would you rather be leading? Who has the edge?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, I'd rather be leading the British force because it's a better military force. They're up against superior position on the Argentinian side and they're up against the fact that it's Mrs. Thatcher who now has to take the next move. She's removed the pressure from herself to a good degree by this first victory. But she has a tough decision to make here.

How much does she want to risk? The possibility of losses to her fleet, the possibility that she may try to capture those islands and not do it. It depends on whether she feels the economic pressure on Argentina, combined with this victory in South Georgia, is enough to make the Argentinians much more cooperative at the negotiating table, or whether they need another push by a move into the Falklands.

WALLACE: Admiral Turner, former Director of the CIA, thank you.

ADMIRAL TURNER: I enjoyed being with you.